

Austro-Hungarian Honorary Consulates in Munster 1845 – 1914

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This study of Austrian consular representation in Limerick, Waterford and Cork-Queenstown prior to WWI is based largely on materials in the Court and State Archive in Vienna. It discusses the reasons for the establishment of the consulates, their location and operation. A full list of the consuls is compiled and profiles of them are provided.

The Austrian consular service has its origin in the early eighteenth century, when a number of consulates were established in the ports of the Ottoman Empire. In 1752 new ones were established in Cadiz, Lisbon, Genoa and the Kingdom of Sicily to promote trade. In order to avoid costs these consular offices were entrusted to existing consuls of friendly nations, usually those of France, England, Spain, Venice, the Netherlands or Denmark, who were given the right to collect and keep the consular fees. As it expanded the Austrian consular service,¹ always short of funds, relied heavily on honorary consuls, to use modern terminology. In 1763 ten of the twenty-seven consular posts were run by honorary consuls, by June 1914, their number had risen to 364 out of a total of 474 consulates. Initially responsibility for the consulates in the West was with the *Allgemeine Hofkammer*, which corresponded to a combined ministry of finance, economy and commerce. In 1849, responsibility was transferred to the newly created Ministry of Trade and it was only in 1859 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gained overall control of the consular network.²

In Ireland, Austrian consular presence had begun in Cork in 1845 with the appointment of George Newenham Harvey as Imperial Royal agent, followed by Waterford in 1846 with the appointment of Josiah Williams as provisional honorary consular agent. A consular office was opened at Dublin in 1848, at Belfast in 1849, at Limerick in 1852, at Sligo in 1857 and at Londonderry in 1860.³ All of the consular offices in Ireland - with the temporary exception of Cork-Queenstown, 1864-80 - were honorary ones.⁴ In the early years, prior to 1849, they depended on the *Consulate* in Liverpool, the *Consulate General* in London, the *Allgemeine Hofkammer*⁵ in Vienna and the *Governo Centrale Marittimo* in Trieste.⁶

In a discussion about reorganisation of the Imperial Austrian consular network in 1854 it was noted

¹ Until 1918, the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Foreign Service was made up of three branches: diplomatic, consular and administrative (HQ).

² The author is indebted to Dr. Bernd Samobor, Mag. Gerhard Gonsa, Dr. Rudolf Jerabek, and Roman Eccher, Austrian State Archive Vienna, for their assistance.

³ It is interesting to note, that at the beginning of 1861, Austria maintained 7 consular offices in Ireland, but none in neighbouring Bavaria nor in Switzerland. The first Austrian honorary consul in Geneva, Switzerland was appointed on 9 March 1861, the first honorary consul in Munich, Bavaria as late as 2 May 1894.

⁴ The following study is based on the data published in the official *Court and State Manual* of the Austrian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and, to provide more detailed information, on the files in the departments 4 (personnel) and 8 (consulates) of the Administrative Registry of the Austrian Court and State Archive. Matters are complicated by the fact, that no manuals have been published for years 1849-1852, 1855, 1861-1865, 1867, 1869-1873 and 1875 and that files on honorary consular officials are few.

⁵ The *General Court Chamber* would correspond to the Ministry of Finance.

⁶ This institution had been established by Imperial Resolution of 30 January 1850. According to § 11 of the decree of the Trade Ministry of 26 April 1850, it 'supervised the effectiveness of the Austrian consular offices and of the communication with those in matters of maritime navigation, especially all matters pertaining to Austrian commercial navigation.'

that while in 1853 two hundred and fifty-two Austrian ships had called in Cork harbour, only sixty-eight did so in 1854. In 1853 eighteen Austrian ships had arrived in Dublin but only three docked in 1854. Twenty-four Austrian ships had come to Limerick in 1853 but only eight in 1854 while in Waterford their number had declined from twenty-three to just one. The reorganisation of the consular network in the British Isles – which was based more on hopes of expanding trade than on facts – was completed by Imperial resolutions of 11 July 1855 and 28 March 1856, leading to nineteen consular offices subordinate to the honorary consulate general in London.⁷ The idea of a separate consulate general for Ireland, to be based at Cork-Queenstown, was briefly considered but rejected.⁸

As all of the Austrian / Austro-Hungarian consular offices – with the exception of Cork-Queenstown between 22 October 1864 and 20 February 1880 – were honorary offices, mostly headed by people who spoke neither German nor Italian, the *lingua franca* of the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) consular service until 1900, it is not surprising, that none of them ever sent reports on the political situation in Ireland. In fact, the Court and State Archive in Vienna, which keeps the Political Archive of the Imperial and Royal Foreign Ministry⁹, contains not a single report from the consular offices in Ireland.

Similar criticism of the poor quality of the consuls throughout the British Isles led to demands for change.¹⁰ In 1863, the I.R. Trade Ministry supported the request to establish regular consulates and vice-consulates, in place of the honorary consuls, at the most important points in the British Isles, among which it counted Cork-Queenstown.¹¹ It even suggested salaries and allowances for the future consuls and lump sums for running the offices to be established. As a result of this petition, Foreign Minister Count Rechberg-Rothentloewen approached Emperor Franz Joseph on 28 May 1864. He did not take up the suggestion to close all honorary consulates in Britain and Ireland, opting instead for 'the establishment of several regular consulates in the main points of traffic, depending from the Consulate General in London'. Cork-Queenstown was the only Irish location considered to be in the main points of traffic: 352 Austrian ships had arrived there in 1852; while by 1860 their number had risen to 421. Rechberg pointed out, that according to reports from London 'several states have appointed regular consuls in Liverpool, Cork-Queenstown and Cardiff', and that 'frequency of Austrian shipping in Cork and Cardiff comes in first place...the overriding importance of the ports of Cork-Queenstown and Cardiff for Austrian maritime trade is evident from the above data, and justifies the conversion of the local honorary consular offices to posts staffed by civil servants...'

The Emperor agreed on 17 June 1864 to promote the honorary consular offices in Liverpool, Cardiff and Cork-Queenstown into regular consulates. A consul for Cork-Queenstown was indeed appointed on a 'provisional basis' on 22 October 1864 but sixteen years later, the consular post was again converted into an honorary office. In 1871 responsibility for the consulates in Ireland was transferred from the honorary consulate general in London to the consulate general in Liverpool, where it remained until World War 1. Eventually several of the other honorary consular offices in Ireland were simply discontinued, namely Limerick in 1897, Sligo in 1901, Waterford in 1903 and Londonderry in May 1914. When Great Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary on 12 August 1914, the three remaining honorary vice-consulates, in Belfast, Dublin and Cork-Queenstown ceased their activities.¹²

⁷ Karl Krabicka, *Das österreichische Konsularwesen zwischen 1849 und 1859*; phil. Diss. Univ. Vienna, Vienna 1953, pp. 90-91 and 103-107.

⁸ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 13, Trade Ministry 12.397 of 20 June 1854.

⁹ Dept. XXXVIII, consulates 1848-1918.

¹⁰ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 13, Great Britain 1850-70, Presidency of Parliament to Foreign Ministry of 13 December 1862.

¹¹ *Idem*, Trade Ministry 1048/511 H of 20 December 1863, Lynn, Penzance.

¹² By August 1914, Austria-Hungary maintained the following consular offices in the United Kingdom: CG London, Liverpool; HC Cardiff, Dublin, Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham; HVC Belfast, Bradford, Cork-Queenstown, Edinburgh-Leith, Limerick, Newport, North Shields-Newcastle, Swansea, Bristol, Falmouth, Hull, Jersey, Plymouth, Portsmouth-Southampton, Waterford, Weymouth-Portland; HCA Methil, Milford, Dartmouth, Dover, Great Yarmouth, Kings-Lynn, Penzance.

Cork and Queenstown

The first Austrian consular office in Ireland was established 5 April 1845 when George Newenham Harvey was appointed I.R. honorary consular agent in Cork.¹³ It is not clear how long Harvey remained in office but the Chargé d'affaires of the Austrian Legation in London reported in 1851 that Mr. William Deene Seymour had been appointed Austrian consular agent in Queenstown on 3 September 1849.¹⁴ Seymour would appear to have been relieved from his functions in 1853, when it was planned to establish a regular Imperial Austrian consulate general in Cork-Queenstown. This decision was not implemented and instead an Austrian harbour captain, Franz Gogola von Leesthal, was for ten months transferred from Croatia to Cork-Queenstown to serve on a provisional basis.¹⁵

In 1854, a consular agency – instead of a consulate general – was established in Cork-Queenstown and Franz (Francis) Michelli, Austrian citizen, sailor, who had lived in London since 1839 as translator and *speditore marittimo*, expressed interest in the position. As his business in London was rather profitable, and a move to Queenstown – where in 1853 consular fees of only 249 LSt had been collected – would mean a considerable financial loss, he insisted on receiving a salary from the Government. When Michelli was appointed I.R. honorary consular agent on 14 July 1854 he was granted a 'personal governmental subsidy' of 260 LSt, in addition to the right to collect the consular fees.¹⁶ Despite this, rumours reached Vienna in 1862 that Michelli had run into serious debts and that on several occasions Anthony Baron Rothschild in London had assisted him by advancing money or making generous donations. During the period 1854-63, Michelli collected consular fees totalling 15,368 LSt, which amounted to an average of 1,536 LSt annually. This was more than the average of the honorary consulate in Liverpool (1,454 LSt), but a far cry from the office in Cardiff, which had collected an average of 5,102 LSt annually. The obvious solution would have been to fire him. Instead, Emperor Francis Joseph by 'truly generous' resolution of 28 August 1862 resolved to keep Michelli and to increase his personal subsidy from 260 LSt to 360 LSt.

When Cork-Queenstown was promoted to 'effective' (i.e. regular) consulate status in 1864 Michelli was appointed as 'provisional I. & R. consul in Cork-Queenstown... whose definite appointment should be reserved for a later date...' He was to receive a salary of 2100 guilders, an allowance of 2000 guilders, and a lump sum to run the office of 1500 guilders.¹⁷ In 1864, only the United States of America and the Kingdom of Sardinia maintained regular consulates in Cork-Queenstown. By now, it was an important port for Austro-Hungarian navigation; in 1869, a total of 208 Austro-Hungarian ships called at its port. Numerous complaints continued to be made against Michelli and in 1870 a 'consular enquiry commission', made up of merchants and ship-owners from Trieste, travelled to Cork to look into the allegations – with no apparent result other than the transfer of responsibility for the office to the consulate general in Liverpool in September 1871. In 1872 Michelli's son Pietro, who apparently had assisted his father in the daily business of the office since 1868, was made chancellor of the consulate.¹⁸ Almost immediately thereafter his father submitted another request for an increase in remuneration. A note meant to support his claims, contains the following interesting information:

¹³ HKA, Report on the changes in personnel that took place in 1845, annex to Hofkammer 2193 to Staatskanzlei (Metternich) from 21 February 1846, k.k. Allg. Hofkammer 300/2 1846.

¹⁴ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 4, box 316, Leg. London XLII A-B of 26 June 1851.

¹⁵ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 4, box 108, Gogola.

¹⁶ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 4, box 217, Michelli, Cons.Gen. London 964 of 19 July 1854 and Trade Ministry of 21 June 1854.

¹⁷ 12 Austrian guilders (florin) equalled 1 LSt. Total income thus equalled 466 LSt. In today's purchasing power, 1 guilder would correspond to EUR 9. Michelli's income of 5100 guilders would thus roughly equal EUR 45,900.

¹⁸ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, Dept. 8, box 46, Cork-Queenstown, Cons. C.-Q. 54 of 2 August 1872.

Cork January 2nd 1873 Prices in Queenstown (Ireland)

Yearly rent in respectable situation annually	from	LSt 80 to LSt 100
Fashionable gradually higher		
Taxes	annually about	LSt 12 to LSt 16
Gas	annually about	LSt 12 to LSt 15
Coals per ton		LSt 1.10 to LSt 1.16
Wages for female servants	annually	LSt 10 to LSt 12
Meat per pound ?		10 p to 11 p
Bread		2 3/8 p
Flour		3 p
Rice		5 p
Potatoes		1 p
Sugar		1 p
Coffee		2 sh
Tea		3 sh 6 p
Milk per pint		2 p
Butter per pound		1/5
Bacon		1
Ham		1/1p
Oil Gallon		10/.

The Consul General in Liverpool, Krapf, asked for comment, reported that:

during the last eight to ten years prices for all necessities of life have considerably increased in Cork-Queenstown, and prices not all, but of most articles, are nearly at the same level as in England. It should be evident to anyone familiar with the local situation that, under such circumstances, an income of fl 4100 which was been awarded to Mr. Michelli, who has to care for wife and four grown up children ... is not even sufficient to allow for the upkeep of his family, let alone to allow them to survive in a decent manner.

Krapf appealed to the Foreign Ministry to grant Michelli 'such a salary, which would enable him to protect him from misery and dire need, without having to take recourse to foreign assistance...' ¹⁹ On several occasions Baron Rothschild had again generously supported Michelli. The Foreign Ministry was not convinced and, investigating the matter further, found out that Michelli's total income was fl 5600. After many more reports and instructions Michelli in April 1874 received a payment of fl 80, at a time when he was 'totally deprived of any means'. ²⁰

In July 1874 Krapf submitted a comprehensive report on consul Michelli:

As far as his social position and other conditions are concerned, Michelli, irrespective of his consular service, in a rather low position, is generally counted among the more popular personalities of Queenstown. He is highly regarded by captains of Austro-Hungarian merchant ships and held in high esteem by them; however, he does not lack enemies who profit from this old man's weaknesses and shortcomings and who are so unscrupulous as to spread in the most merciless manner rumours and even question his qualification for the post of Austro-Hungarian consular representative. ²¹

¹⁹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 46, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 1146 of 7 January 1873.

²⁰ *Idem*, Emb. London 4555/59 of 10 May 1874.

²¹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 46, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 405 reserviert of 21 July 1874.

After three years of heart disease, Francis Michelli died in his house at the *Crescent* in Queenstown on 1 October 1876.²² Caretakership was entrusted to his son Pietro Michelli on a provisional basis and he was granted *durante gerenza provvisoria... emolumento fiorini 300 al mese*.²³ Later that month Foreign Minister Count Andrassy, then in Budapest, recommended the appointment of Benedict Row, vice-consul in Venice, for the Cork position and Emperor Francis Joseph gave his approval in Vienna on 1 November 1876.

On 19 February 1877 Row informed Vienna that he had arrived, together with his five children, in Queenstown. 'The long voyage via Milan, Turin, Paris, London, Liverpool and Dublin, the acquisition of luggage, packaging and transport of books, underwear, bed-linen and tablecloth, clothing and personal belongings... cost 1070 guilders in gold', which he wanted to see reimbursed by the Foreign Ministry. Money issues were raised again later in the year: he informed the Foreign Ministry that he had spent 174 LSt on expenses. Office rent and salaries of servants amounted to LSt 53, costs for post, telegrams to LSt 20, chancery equipment to LSt 25; maintenance of flagpole and flag cost LSt 1, and LSt 20 were spent on 'welfare expenses'.²⁴ For this last item, more than 10% of total expenses, he offered an interesting explanation:

The Catholic Church in Ireland has no other income than donations of the faithful. In addition to the regular collection at church every Sunday extraordinary subscriptions for religious or humanitarian purposes are often opened. As representative of one of the foremost Catholic nations I have to take part in these all the more so, as the register of all amounts collected is publicly read out in church mentioning both sum and donor. Decency and decorum of the office entrusted to me by Imperial grace imposes an expense on me, which is in no relation to my personal means.

Row's 'functional allowance' of 1600 guilders was spent on rent and salaries of servants – he thus requested an increase of the lump sum to run the office and an inflation allowance of 400 guilders; the request was granted by Vienna.

By Imperial resolution of 29 August 1879 the regular consulate Cork was transformed into an honorary office and downgraded to vice consulate, the measure to take effect after Row's appointment to a new post. In October Row wrote to the Consul General in Liverpool about a possible candidate for the post of honorary vice-consul:

The only person among the few Austro-Hungarian nationals living here, who could be suggested – in my most humble view – as being qualified to head the future honorary vice-consulate is Mr. Antonio Morovich from Fiume²⁵, established here. He is the son of the landowner and ship-owner Mr. Dominik Morovich, who died several years ago. When his wife, a daughter of Mr. Kasimir Cosulich Ritter von Pecine, President of the Fiume Chamber of Commerce, fell victim to a mental disease a few years ago, he decided, with the approval of his father in law, to settle in England as shipbroker. Together with his brother Alois he opened an agency in Queenstown and one in Falmouth, which latter he transferred last year to his other partner, Mr. William Broad, I. & R. vice-consul there. Mr. Morovich... through his decent conduct has gained the respect of his fellow citizens, who often arrive here as captains, and has also gained the respect of the business community in Cork and Waterford.²⁶

²² Registration of Births and Deaths in Ireland, District of Queenstown, in the Union of Cork, in the County of Cork, No. 346.

²³ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 4, box 217, Foreign Ministry 16.877 of 4 November 1876. The amount equals LSt 25 monthly.

²⁴ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 4, box 293, IC. Cork-Queenstown 292 of 19 November 1877.

²⁵ Presently Rijeka, Croatia.

²⁶ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 46, Cons. Cork-Queenstown 172 of 3 October 1879.

Ambassador Count Karolyi in London accepted this advice²⁷ and on 20 February 1880, Consul Row handed over the duties of the office to Morovich,²⁸ and left for his new post as consul in Syra, an island in the Aegean Sea. On 19 May 1880, Anton Morovich's brother Luigi Morovich, captain in the Austro-Hungarian merchant navy and partner in Anton's business, was made honorary chancellor of the Cork vice-consulate. Morovich reported in 1884 that the number of Austro-Hungarian ships calling at the port of Queenstown was steadily declining. In 1879 ten ships with cargo had arrived, in 1880 sixteen, in 1881 ten, in 1882 six, in 1883 nine, and in the first six months of 1884 one only. He explained:

When our trading vessels maintained an intensive trade with Great Britain, especially during the period when the transport of corn from the Black Sea to the United Kingdom kept a whole fleet of sailing ships busy, Queenstown as port of call was a consular post of overwhelming importance, its consular revenues covering all expenses of running the chancery and salaries of personnel. Since nearly all transport of imports and exports to and from Great Britain have been monopolised by her colossal merchant steamer fleet, our merchant navy has been forced to seek less profitable employment.

Morovich asked the Consulate General in Liverpool to grant him a regular salary²⁹ but this request was immediately turned down by the Foreign Ministry in Vienna.³⁰ Morovich's reaction came promptly, and on 4 September 1884 he sent a letter to his superior in Liverpool informing him he had to '*rinunciare all' onorevole carica di Vice Console... in conseguenza della mancanza totale d'arrivi di bastimenti Nazionali, e per mancanza d'altri risorse*'.³¹ Word of Morovich's resignation must have spread fast, as already on 9 September 1884 George McQueen, local director of the Cunard steamship-company in Queenstown, residing at No. 3 Scott's Square, successfully applied for the vacant position. After McQueen's death on 21 November 1891, provisional caretakership was entrusted to Edward Dean, who had for twenty-five years worked for Cunard in Queenstown³² and in March 1892 he was appointed to the position. He resigned four years later. Consul Prumler in Liverpool had no difficulty in understanding the reasons given by Dean for this action:

For years now, neither a citizen of the monarchy has arrived in Cork-Queenstown, nor, with one or two exceptions, a ship flying the national flag. Business transactions are close to nil, thus no consular fees have been collected. He (Dean) is no longer inclined, to be harassed by orders to regularly submit periodical reports etc. and thus gives his resignation. He flatly and decidedly refused my request to hand in his resignation on paper of proper size.

Prumler requested permission to relieve Dean of his post, and to dispatch the archive to the I.R. Maritime Authority in Trieste.³³ The Foreign Ministry on 10 October 1896 accepted Dean's resignation, and the fairly obvious suggestion of leaving the post in Cork-Queenstown vacant for the time being. The business of the vice-consulate was however not transferred to any of the other consulates in Ireland, but taken care of directly by the Consulate-General in Liverpool.

²⁷ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 46, Cork, Emb. London XCII A-G of 22 October 1879.

²⁸ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 46, Cork, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 271 of 24 February 1880.

²⁹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 118, Cork, Morovich to Cons.Gen. Liverpool of 30 June 1884.

³⁰ *Idem*, Foreign Ministry to Cons.Gen. Liverpool of 26 July 1884.

³¹ *Idem*, Cons. Queenstown No. 39 of 4 September 1884.

³² Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 118, Imp. Resolution of 26 March 1892, Foreign Ministry 12.653/10 of 29 March 1892.

³³ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 118, Cons. Gen. Liverpool LXXXIV of 22 Sept. 1896, annex letter Dean of 13 August 1896.

In 1903 Vice-Consul Pitner, caretaker of the Liverpool office, reported on the matter of the vacant consular offices in Cork-Queenstown³⁴ but nothing happened for five more years until the Foreign Ministry again studied Austro-Hungarian consular representation in Ireland. The Ambassador in London reported that:

The lack of an I. & R. consular office in Cork-Queenstown had manifested itself from time to time, contrary to Waterford, Limerick and Sligo, where the totally superfluous I. & R. honorary offices should best be closed down. Under the circumstances I would... instruct Consul General Pisko in Liverpool to look, in view of reactivation of the honorary vice-consulate in Cork-Queenstown, for a personality qualified and willing to take over consular functions.³⁵

Pisko received six applications for the post and travelled to Cork in May 1909 to interview four candidates. His choice was A. C. Horne, vice-consul of Germany and Sweden, agent for at least 21 steamship companies – who already in 1896 had expressed his interest in the position – and ‘who has an office in Cork and in the port of Queenstown’. Pisko noted that ‘the esteemed I. & R. Ministry for Foreign Affairs does not, as a rule, agree to entrust our consular representation to personalities who already represent other states. On the other hand it would seem to me very important, that our I. & R. vice-consul in Cork is well versed in shipping matters, as these will most likely be the kind of activities most frequent (accidents, brawls between captain and crew, etc.)...’³⁶ Eventually in August 1909, Horne was appointed³⁷ and his tenure lasted until the British declaration of war on Austria-Hungary on 12 August 1914 and the end of its consular offices in Ireland.

List of Austrian consuls in Cork-Queenstown, 1845 -1914

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Period of Office</i>
George Newenham Harvey	Honorary Consul Agent	5 April 1845 - ?
William Deene Seymour	Honorary Consul Agent	3 September 1849 – ca. 1853
Franz Gogola von Leesthal	Caretaker HCA	1853
Franz Michelli	Honorary Consul Agent Consul (provisional)	24 June 1854 22 Oct. 1864 – 1 Oct. 1876
Pietro Michelli	Caretaker HCA	1 Oct. 1876 -
Benedict Row	Consul	1 Nov. 1876-19 January 1880
Antonio Morovich	Honorary Vice-Consul	22 Feb. 1880 – 4 Sept. 1884
George McQueen	Honorary Vice-Consul	29 Nov. 1884- 21 Nov. 1891

³⁴ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, K 252, Waterford, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 1054 of 7 July 1903.

³⁵ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 118, Cork-Queenstown, Emb. London LXXXVII-B of 30 October 1908.

³⁶ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 118, Cork, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 910 of 13 May 1909.

³⁷ *Idem*, Foreign Ministry 71.366/10 of 17 August 1909.

Edward Dean

Caretaker HCA
Honorary Vice-Consul

November 1891 –
26 Mar. 1892-10 Oct. 1896

Andrew Coutts Horne

Honorary Vice-Consul

17 Aug. 1909- 12 Aug. 1914

Limerick

In the Spring of 1846, the firm of *Ryan Brothers* in Limerick suggested to the Imperial Austrian Ambassador in London the establishment of an Austrian consulate in Limerick.³⁸ Ambassador Moritz Count Dietrichstein-Proskau-Leslie duly informed the President of the *General Court Chamber*, Baron Kübeck, who in turn informed State Chancellor Metternich, that 'the I.R. Ambassador in London had forwarded a letter by Ryan Bros. from Limerick in Ireland, who in view of the rising import trade of that harbour hint at the usefulness of establishing an Austrian consular office there, and offer to take over such office'. Kübeck forwarded the report also to Count Stadion, Governor of Trieste, requesting his opinion of the necessity of establishing a consular office in Limerick, and well as on the qualifications of the Ryan brothers.³⁹ However, it would seem that a negative view was taken on the candidature of the Ryan Brothers as the first Austrian consular agent in Limerick was William Harry Harrison, who died in 1851. Unfortunately, no files on Harrison have surfaced so far.

On 18 February 1852 the Consul General in London, Lionel Baron Rothschild, appointed Michael Robert Ryan provisional consular agent in Limerick. In 1855, Rothschild, evaluating Ryan's activities, concluded that 'in former times he has performed his consular duties neither to the satisfaction of the consulate general nor of captains. However, recently he is anxious to do whatever is necessary, so that his confirmation in office is requested'.⁴⁰ The Trade Ministry following Rothschild's advice, confirmed Ryan in his position, thus ending his status as a provisional agent only. Following Ryan's death in December 1874, the Austro-Hungarian Consul General in Liverpool, Dr. Ferdinand Ritter Krapf von Liverhoff, charged Ryan's brother in law, John Rickard Tinsley, with the caretakership of the I.&R. office. He advised the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in London that he would soon submit a proposal for the appointment of a consular agent.⁴¹ Krapf in Liverpool had the choice of four candidates: Tinsley, acting caretaker, head of the company Tinsley & Co., from one of the most respected families of Limerick, wealthy, and one of the directors of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce, Captain George Spaight, who had 'been 12 years in the Mediterranean and spoke Italian', an Austrian citizen Carlo Sciascia, and Richard Philipps.

Carlo Sciascia, born in Trani near Bari on 28 November 1828, had acquired Austrian nationality and was a rare example of an Austrian who *con dolore dovette venire all' estero a procacciare un pane per una famiglia iniziata qui colla speranza di vivere con essa nella mia patria adottiva*, meaning that he had to leave his fatherland to make a living in Limerick, where he became the preferred point of contact of Italian and Austrian sailors. *Numero amici colleghi e connazionale m' hanno sempre preferito e quindi tenuto in continua rispetto ed attivita per introdurre i loro bastimenti in Dogana e Spedirli; assisterli nei riallamenti ad in tutto quelle que un bastimento pu abbisognare; come traduttore dei Giornali di bordo in casi di avarie, come interprete alla Corte in casi di dispute; ad infine in tutte contiguenza che un Capitano pu incontrare...*⁴²

Krapf and the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London suggested the upgrading of the consular office in Limerick from honorary consular agency to honorary vice consulate and the appointment of John Rickard Tinsley to the post of I.&R. honorary vice-consul:

³⁸ HKA, Präs. HK, 4612/1846.

³⁹ HKA, HK 4612/1846 (FMPräs .Nr. 1342), letter of 19 June 1846.

⁴⁰ AVA, k.k. HM Präsidium, 410/1855.

⁴¹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 49, Embassy London CV-B of 23.12.1874.

⁴² Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 49.

Limerick, capital of the county of same name, situated in the province of Munster, located on an island and on both banks of the river Shannon, 60 miles from its estuary into Shannon Bay, has a population of roughly 60.000 souls... As Limerick is rather important, nearly all foreign Governments have appointed consular officers to look after their interests. Belgium is represented by a consul, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden-Norway by vice-consuls, Austria-Hungary, the US, France, Greece, Italy, Turkey by consular agents.⁴³

The suggestion was well received in Vienna, and accordingly the consular agency was upgraded to vice-consulate and Tinsley appointed Austro-Hungarian honorary vice-consul in Limerick by Emperor Francis Joseph on 1 July 1875 in Prague⁴⁴. Tinsley held the position for the next fifteen years, submitting his resignation in November 1890 on health grounds and due to his advanced age, he was 76 years old:

As Mr. Tinsley, upon advice of his doctors, has to leave Limerick for a longer period, the I. & R. Consulate General in Liverpool has entrusted caretakership of the office to Sir James Spaight. The latter is head of Francis Spaight & Sons, Limited, in Limerick, which had been founded by his father roughly a century ago. It is engaged in wholesale timber import. Spaight disposes of very important means, and enjoys eminent respectability... He is consular representative of the German Empire; because of the patriotic feelings he had manifested under the most difficult circumstances, he has been ennobled by Queen Victoria, and has been awarded the honorific office of deputy to the governor.⁴⁵

The Austrian ambassador in London, Count Deym, agreed to this measure, announced the submission of proposals for a definite reappointment of a vice-consul in Limerick, and requested acceptance of Tinsley's resignation as soon as possible. But the Foreign Ministry only accepted Tinsley's resignation on a provisional basis; he was to be definitely relieved of his duties when his successor was appointed.⁴⁶ However Sir James Spaight died in February 1892, and 'the office was provisionally entrusted to the manager of his company, Mr. F. J. Ferguson.'⁴⁷ After five years as caretaker of the honorary consular office in Limerick, a rather angry Ferguson on 13 January 1897 sent a short letter to the Austro-Hungarian Consul-General in Liverpool: 'Sir, As I have not time to devote to this Consulate work I beg you will relieve me of the office of acting Vice Consul'. The Consul-General in Liverpool reminded the Foreign Ministry that:

Ferguson had requested on repeated occasions to be relieved of his duties, he had however in every occasion been consoled with the promise that a new vice-consul would be appointed as soon as possible... As this has not happened since, Ferguson saw it fit to resign. The only and decisive reason for this is the total lack of any income from consular fees. Limerick plays no role whatsoever neither in maritime, nor commercial or industrial respect; only one national ship has called on Limerick during the last seven years⁴⁸; no nationals are living here, (the vice-consulate) has not sent in any report for the last decade. The activities of the I.& R. representative were confined to fill in 'nil' in the forms for bookkeeping forwarded to him.

⁴³ *Idem*, Embassy London LXI/F/531 of 21 March 1875.

⁴⁴ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 1, Status of Consulates 1880, MFA 10.828/VIII.

⁴⁵ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 158, Limerick, Emb. London LXXXI-D of 19 November 1890.

⁴⁶ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 158, Limerick, Foreign Ministry 32.574 of 30 November 1890.

⁴⁷ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 158, Limerick, Emb. London VI-B of 10 February 1892.

⁴⁸ Meaning the period 1890-6.

Under the circumstances, Consul Prumler in Liverpool concluded, that 'in view of the absolute lack of any importance of that place the reappointment of a vice-consul would not seem worth recommending at this stage'.⁴⁹ On 30 April 1897 Ambassador Count Deym informed Vienna that he had instructed the Consulate General in Liverpool, according to the Ministry's intentions, to accept Ferguson's resignation, to transfer the archive of the vice-consulate in Limerick to Liverpool and to refrain from any action concerning reappointment of an honorary vice-consul in Limerick.⁵⁰

By 1903, the Austro-Hungarian honorary consular offices in Limerick, Cork-Queenstown, Waterford and Sligo were all vacant, leaving Austria-Hungary without a consular representation in the West and South of Ireland. As far as Limerick was concerned, the caretaker of the Consulate General in Liverpool, Pitner, reported that:

the office in Limerick is vacant since the resignation of the provisional caretaker J.F. Ferguson. The tasks of its consular district have been transferred to the vice-consulate in Belfast.... In all three cases⁵¹... no new consuls were appointed, as these (offices) are of no value whatsoever for the national trade, the number of national sail boats sailing to Ireland having shrunk to zero. This situation has in no way changed, as far as I can see... I do not believe I should suggest re-appointments to all those consular offices presently vacant, as it would be quite superfluous to maintain seven consulates in Ireland, whereas two seem to be largely sufficient for Scotland.

Pitner recommended closing the consular offices in Limerick Waterford and Sligo.⁵² The Foreign Ministry in Vienna accepted this suggestion and brought to an end, after nearly 50 years, the history of the Austro-Hungarian consular office in Limerick.

List of Austrian consuls in Limerick, 1851 -1903

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Period of Office</i>
William Harry Harrison	Honorary Consul Agent	? – 1851
Michael Robert Ryan	Honorary Consul Agent	18 Feb. 1852 – Dec. 1874
John Richard Tinsley	Caretaker HCA	December 1874
	Honorary Vice-Consul	1 July 1875 – Nov. 1890
Sir James Spaight	Caretaker HCA	November 1890 – Feb. 1892
F.J. Ferguson	Caretaker HCA	Feb. 1892 – 13 January 1897
	Position Vacant	1897 - 1903

Waterford

The first Austrian honorary consular agent in Waterford, Josiah Williams was appointed in December 1846 and served until his death in February 1863. In 1855 he was described as a 'merchant, rich,

⁴⁹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 158, CG Liverpool VII Adm/60 of 15 January 1897.

⁵⁰ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 158, Limerick, Embassy London XXXI-C of 30 April 1897.

⁵¹ Cork-Queenstown., Limerick and Sligo.

⁵² Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 252, Waterford, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 1054 of 7 July 1903.

respected, very dignified, but unfortunately very old; however, he is assisted in his office by a very intelligent employee and both together perform the consular service in a very satisfactory manner'.⁵³ He was succeeded by his son, Richard Pope Williams, on a provisional basis and this situation continued for three and a half years with very unsatisfactory results as Lord Rothschild reported from London to Vienna early in 1867:

several captains of Austrian ships refused to present their ship's papers to him, or to register with him as prescribed by law, the captains wanting instead to see his consular diploma. The consulate general did not fail to send Mr. Williams an a certified copy of his decree in Italian translation for presentation to those captains refusing to recognize him. Much to Williams' regret, this document was not accepted and the bad example was followed by nearly all captains whose ships sailed into Waterford harbour. The reason for this unanimous and continuous refusal was an instruction given by the Central Naval Authority not to recognise Mr. Williams as Austrian representative, as the post in Waterford was considered vacant and Mr. Williams unable to produce a consular diploma.⁵⁴

As a result, Williams was unable to collect the considerable consular fees from captains. The report from London however prompted the authorities in Trieste to look into the matter of appointing an honorary consular agent in Waterford, where apart from Williams, two other candidates, Anthony P. Allen and Henry Gulibert, had expressed interest in the position. While the subsequent report on Williams was not very impressive, noting that he 'is not in business at present, except as Lloyd's Agent, he is a medical man by profession, but not in practice, he is not well acquainted in commercial matters but there is no doubt he is a man of fair means...'⁵⁵, he was formally appointed on 2 May 1867⁵⁶ but died eight months later on 23 January 1868.⁵⁷

Ten days after Williams' death, Lord Rothschild reported that there were six candidates for the vacant position and he recommended Joseph Strangman, president of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce⁵⁸ and he was given the position almost immediately. On 18 February 1868 the I. & R. Foreign Ministry authorized the Embassy in London, *"to appoint J. Strangman I.R. (sic) consular agent in Waterford and, at the same time, to invite him to make use of the services of Mr. Power or of any other capable assistant, who speaks Italian, in case he lacks knowledge of that language..."*⁵⁹. Power was one of the unsuccessful applicants for the position.⁶⁰

In 1880, the Consul General in Liverpool, Kohen von Tengervar, suggested raising the consular office in Waterford from consular agency to vice-consulate and to appoint Joseph Strangman honorary vice-consul. Having praised the work of the consular agent to date he went on to argue that:

Such a promotion would be all the more welcome, as the I. & R. Government already in 1875 has deigned to appoint vice-consuls in Limerick and Belfast, places which lag far behind in importance compared to Waterford, and to convert the existing agencies into vice-consulates. Waterford, capital of the county of same name, situated on the south bank of the River Suir, not far from the latter's junction with the river Barrow, is one of the foremost ports of Ireland, and all the more important, as the port is equally favourably situated for foreign trade and trade from the interior of the island. Waterford is seat of a Roman-catholic

⁵³ Report by the Austrian Consul General in London, Lionel Baron Rothschild.

⁵⁴ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 16, Cons. Gen. London I of 5 January 1867.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, Stock Exchange chamber Trieste 719 to Central Naval Authority of 6 March 1867.

⁵⁶ *Idem*, Embassy London XXII A-B of 5 June 1867.

⁵⁷ *Idem*, Embassy London V of 25 January 1868.

⁵⁸ *Idem*, Cons. Gen. London VI of 6 February 1868.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, Foreign Ministry 2163/H of 18 February 1868.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, Cons. Gen. London VI of 6 February 1868.

and an Anglican bishop. The spacious harbour, which is linked to Liverpool and other important sea ports of Great Britain by regular steamer service, and is protected by fortresses, furthermore served as station to the mail steamers arriving daily from Milford Haven. In addition to the very important trade, mainly export of corn, especially oats, flour, rape-seed, and namely tallow, butter, live and slaughtered animals, the roughly 80.000 inhabitants are engaged in fishing of herring and (production of) dried cod, which gives employment to more than 200 boats annually. Industry is made up of wool and flax spinning mills, beer breweries, spirits distilleries, as well as a few iron and glass factories. Nearly all foreign powers are represented by vice-consuls in Waterford...⁶¹

Under these circumstances, raising the consular office in Waterford from consular agency to vice-consulate was very desirable, a view shared by ambassador Count Karolyi in London. On 9 May 1880 Foreign Minister Baron Haymerle approached Emperor Franz Joseph in this matter, who on 15 May resolved to promote the office in Waterford to vice-consulate and appoint Joseph Strangman honorary vice-consul of Austria-Hungary. At that time Joseph Strangman, of Strangman Brothers, fire and office agents and corn merchants, 19 The Mall, was representing Austria-Hungary, the German Empire and Sweden-Norway.⁶²

In 1886, Strangman ran into financial problems, and word reached London that he was bankrupt. When first asked to resign, he answered by expressing his surprise at being so requested.⁶³ On 6 March 1886, Ambassador Karolyi cabled to Vienna that 'Vice-Consul Strangman in Waterford had ceased payments. According to Foreign Ministry instruction 13482 ex 1884 I have requested him to resign immediately, otherwise I would relieve him of his office on Monday'. It was not necessary to take such drastic step, as Strangman sent in his resignation on 9 March 1886 to Ambassador Karolyi.

Caretakership of the consular office was entrusted to H. E. Clibborn. In August 1886 the Embassy in London informed Vienna, that 'the I & R. Consulate General in Liverpool has named Mr. Abraham Stephens, wholesale importer of corn, as being the person best suited to provisionally head the vice-consular post in Waterford, as the person originally designated for this task, Mr. H. E. Clibborn, has declared shortly after taking over his functions, that in view of his being overburdened with private business he was unable to continue running the consulate...' Under the circumstances, chargé d'affaires Hengelmüller suggested that A. Stephens, owner of A. Stephens & Sons⁶⁴, be appointed honorary vice consul⁶⁵ and he was duly made provisional caretaker of the vice-consulate and served in this capacity from 4 August 1886 until his death on 15 May 1889.⁶⁶

His son Edward John Stephens took over the post of provisional caretaker and immediately applied for the position of honorary vice-consul in Waterford. His candidacy was supported by Consul General Kohen von Tengervár in Liverpool and Ambassador Count Deym in London, and he was appointed on 7 July 1889. Stephens officially began his new function in early September 1889 but over the following years, he did not really bother to run the business of the vice-consulate in a serious manner. In 1898, the Consulate General in Liverpool had gained the impression 'that neither has (the vice-consulate in) Waterford ever been called upon by citizens of the monarchy, nor has is ever sent in a report of whatever kind ... this is proof that E. J. Stephens does not care the least even to give the appearance to act according to his duties... It would seem best to relieve him of his function and to let

⁶¹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 252, Waterford, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 527 of 8 April 1880.

⁶² Slater's 1881 Directory, communication by Donald Moore, Waterford City Archivist.

⁶³ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 252, Waterford Letter Strangman of 3 March 1880 to Foreign Ministry.

⁶⁴ Abraham Stephens & son of John Street, New Ross Co. Wexford are listed as corn merchants in Slater's 1881 directory; communication by Donald Moore, Waterford City Archivist.

⁶⁵ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, dept. 8, box 252, Waterford, Emb. London XLIV-F of 4 August 1886.

⁶⁶ Court and State Archive, Vienna, *idem*, Emb. London XXXVIII of 23 May 1889.

the I. & R. honorary vice-consulate vacant until further notice...'⁶⁷ However the Foreign Ministry instructed Ambassador Count Deym 'for the time being to request Stephens once again to perform his duties...'⁶⁸ and he thus carried on, and it was only his failure in 1903 to forward a parcel sent from Austria to its destination, that brought an end to his consular career. It seemed to consul Pitner in Liverpool 'that Mr. Stephens has no time for the duties connected with his post as I. & R. vice-consul, as his correspondence is done by ship-agents Matthew Farrell & Sons...'⁶⁹ Further investigation revealed that Stephens 'seems not to live in Waterford, but in Duncannon in Wexford County, roughly 20 miles from Waterford, coming only rarely to Waterford. In addition, to all appearances, Mr. St. does not maintain an office in Waterford, as his mail is picked up by Messrs. Farrell & Sons. As he carried out his official duties to a very limited extent', consul general Pitner believed that 'it would be without any value to the interests of the consular service to keep Mr. Stephens in his post.'⁷⁰ Upon instructions, Count Deym in London had the Consulate General in Liverpool 'request Mr. Stephens to send in his resignation in the shortest possible delay...'⁷¹ It was only on 20 April 1903, that Stephens did send his resignation to the Consulate General in Liverpool. Stephen's renunciation was gladly accepted by the Foreign Ministry in Vienna, whereof he was informed in June of 1903.⁷²

It would appear from the scanty evidence, that Mr. W. Farrell of Farrell & Sons had already for quite a while acted as caretaker ad interim of the Waterford consular office; he seems to have been, around 1900, consular representative of five states. The question whether a new I. & R. honorary vice-consul should be appointed for Waterford had to be considered in the context of the possible eventual reopening of the then vacant consular offices in Cork-Queenstown, Limerick and Sligo. In June 1903, the consulate-general in Liverpool suggested the appointment of Mr. Robert Macbeth, manager of the Bank of Ireland for the post. The embassy in London left the I. & R. Foreign Ministry the choice between two options, namely closing the offices in Waterford, Sligo and Limerick, adding the consular districts of Sligo and Waterford to the consulate in Dublin, and the Limerick district to Cork-Queenstown, or keeping the Waterford office and appointing Macbeth.⁷³ The Ballhausplatz decided for the first alternative, thus ending the Austro-Hungarian consular presence in Waterford.

List of Austrian consuls in Waterford, 1846 -1903

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Period of Office</i>
Josiah Williams	Honorary Consul Agent	4 Dec. 1846 - 22 Feb. 1863
Richard Pope Williams	Caretaker HCA	12 March 1863
	Honorary Consul Agent	2 May 1867 – 23 Jan. 1868
Joseph Strangman	Honorary Consul Agent	18 Feb. 1868
	Honorary Vice Consul	15 Jan. 1880–9 March 1886
H. E. Clibborn	Caretaker HCA	March 1886 –
Abraham Stephens	Caretaker HCA	4 Aug. 1886 – 15 May 1889+
Edward John Stephens	Caretaker HCA	16 May 1889
	Honorary Vice Consul	7 July 1889 – 20 April 1903

⁶⁷ *Idem*, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 463 of 29 March 1898.

⁶⁸ *Idem*, Foreign Ministry 19.241/1898 of 25 April 1898.

⁶⁹ Court and State Archive, Vienna, AR, F 24, box 45, private claims 289, Cons. Gen. Liverpool III/33 Adm of 9 January 1903.

⁷⁰ *Idem*, Cons. Gen. Liverpool XXVIII Adm. of 26 February 1903.

⁷¹ *Idem*, Foreign Ministry 17.789/10 of 26 March 1903.

⁷² *Idem*, Cons. Gen. Liverpool 1054 of 7 July 1903.

⁷³ *Idem*, Emb. London XLI R. of 17 July 1903.

